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TIET'S DISSENT IT IS NOT KNOWN HOW COURT DIVIDED ON THE ISSUE, SINCE VOTES ARE NOT MADE PUBLIC.

4. THE SUPREME COURT BUILDING WAS CORDONED OFF BY THE SAIGON POLICE, BUT ANTICIPATED DISTURBANCES FAILED TO MATERIALIZE. THE ONLY ENCNT OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE OCCURRED WHEN A GROUP OF 10 WOMEN LED BY THE WELL-KNOWN LEFTIST ORGANIZER, MRS NGO BA THANH, ATTEMPTED TO HAND AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CHIEF JUSTICE PROTESTING ARTICLE 10-7 AND WAS "INVITED" TO ACCOMPANY POLICE TO THE FIRST PRECINCT HEADQUARTERS WHERE THEY SPENT THE DAY.

5. THE DECISION WAS EXPECTED AND SO DOES NOT ALTER THE FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN OPERATING.
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SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT THIEU, JULY 15, 1971: ELECTIONS

1. I RECALLED OUR PREVIOUS TALKS ABOUT THE CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE OF FAIRNESS IN THE COMING ELECTIONS. IN THIS CONNECTION, I SAID THERE HAD BEEN MANY ACCUSATIONS RECENTLY FROM THE VARIOUS PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES AND THEIR SUPPORTERS, ESPECIALLY RELATIVE TO THE ENDORSEMENT PROVISION OF THE ELECTION LAW.

2. I SAID THAT MANY OF THE CHARGES ARE NO DOUBT GREATLY OVER-DRAWN, AND MANY CALL ON THE UNITED STATES TO TAKE ACTIONS AND POSITIONS THAT ARE IMPROPER. NEVERTHELESS, WE HAD HAD REPORTS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES THAT RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FAIRNESS OF THE ELECTIONS. THESE INCLUDED CRITICISMS A) THAT PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS ARE BEING SUBJECTED TO PRESSURE TO ENDORSE YOU FOR PRESIDENT; B) THAT EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO GAIN SUFFICIENT CONTROL OVER THE ENDORSEMENT PROCESS TO ELIMINATE VICE PRESIDENT KY AS A CANDIDATE; C) THAT CONTINGENT ENDORSEMENTS WHICH CAN LATER BE SURFACED TO INVALIDATE ENDORSEMENTS OF OTHER CANDIDATES OR USED TO LAUNCH A FOURTH CANDIDATE SHOULD MINH AND KY WITHDRAW ARE BEING OBTAINED; AND D) THAT YOU HAVE PROMISES OF ENDORSEMENTS FROM OVER 100 LEGISLATORS AND 400 COUNCILLORS.

3. THIEU SAID THAT NONE OF THESE ACCUSATIONS WERE TRUE. HE COMMENTED WITH SOME BITTERNESS REGARDING THE ACTIVITIES OF VICE PRESIDENT KY AND THE LETTER WHICH HE HAD MADE PUBLIC ON JULY 13. AT PRESENT, HE HAD FIFTY ENDORSEMENTS FROM THE LOWER HOUSE AND HAD NOT YET SOLICITED ANY FROM THE SENATE. MEMBERS OF THE DAI VIET, CAP TIEN, AND THE AN QUANG BUDDHISTS IN THE LOWER HOUSE AND AMONG THE COUNCILLORS HAVE NOT SIGNED FOR HIM. SENATOR HUYEN, LEADER OF THE INDEPENDENT BLOC, IN THE SENATE INFORMED THIEU THAT THEY PROPOSED TO ABSTAIN IN GIVING

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ENDORSEMENTS TO ANY CANDIDATE, AND THE AN QUANG BLOC, OF COURSE, WOULD NOT ENDORSE HIM. EVEN THOUGH ASSEMBLY MEMBERS AND COUNCILLORS BELONGING TO THESE GROUPS HAVE NOT OFFERED TO ENDORSE HIS CANDIDACY, HE HAS NOT PUT PRESSURE ON ANY OF THEIR MEMBERS HOLDING POSITIONS IN THE CENTRAL OR PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS.

4. HE SAID THAT GENERAL MINH NOW HAD FORTY-FOUR ASSEMBLY ENDORSEMENTS. MINH HAD SELECTED AS A VICE PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING MATE EITHER SENATOR VU VAN MAU OR DR MINH, MAYOR OF DANANG IN 1966 AND THE LEADER IN THE BUDDHIST STRUGGLE MOVEMENT THEN. IF MINH WERE SELECTED AS THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, SENATOR MAU WOULD BE APPOINTED PRIME MINISTER.

5. THIEU WONDERED HOW LONG MINH WOULD KEEP UP WHAT HE REFERRED TO AS HIS "BLACKMAIN", I.E., TRYING TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE U.S. VIRTUALLY TO RUN THE ELECTIONS AND TO THREATEN THAT IF KY DID NOT BECOME A CANDIDATE HE (MINH) WOULD NOT RUN. THIEU COMMENTED THAT IF MINH DOES NOT RUN, HE WILL BE FINISHED POLITICALLY. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF HE IS A CANDIDATE, EVEN IF DEFEATED, HE CAN BECOME THE CATALYST FOR A RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION AND PUT HIMSELF IN A POSITION TO OCCUPY A LEADING ROLE IN THE ELECTION IN 1975.

6. TURNING TO KY, THIEU SAID THAT HIS LETTER WAS ADDRESSED TO FOREIGN OPINION RATHER THAN TO THE VIETNAMESE AND NOTED A VEILED THREAT OF A COUP. EVERYONE KNEW THIS WAS SOMETHING KY HAD NO POWER TO CARRY OUT. I ASKED THIEU WHETHER HE SAW ANY HINT OR SUGGESTION FOR RECONCILIATION IN THE LAST PARAGRAPH, BUT HE SHRUGGED THIS OFF. KY'S PAPER, LAP TROUNG, HE SAID, INSULTS THE PRESIDENT DAILY. IN ORDER TO CURRY FAVOR WITH THE CATHOLICS, KY IS NOW PUTTING IT OUT THAT DIEM'S DEATH WAS CAUSED BY THE FACT THAT "COLONEL THIEU" DELAYED IN CARRYING OUT ORDERS TO PROCEED TO THE PALACE IN TIME TO PROTECT DIEM. BUT, HE ADDED, EVERYONE IN VIET-NAM KNOWS KY AND HE IS NOT WELL CAMOUFLAGED. IF HE SHOULD BE ELECTED PRESIDENT THE DAYS OF GENERAL LOAN'S REPRESSIVE RULE BY THE POLICE WOULD RETURN. THIEU SAID HE DID NOT PROPOSE TO GET INTO DISPUTES WITH KY AND GAVE ME A COPY OF THE NEWS RELEASE HE IS PUTTING OUT TODAY (SENT SEPARATELY).

7. THIEU THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE PROPOSED TO TAKE ALL POSSIBLE MEASURES TO SEE THAT THE ELECTIONS WERE FAIRLY CONDUCTED. HE HAD ALLOCATED 40 MILLION PIASTERS TO SET UP AN ELECTION INFORMATION CENTER IN SAIGON WHICH WOULD FUNCTION FROM 15 AUGUST TO 15 OCTOBER. IT WOULD CONTAIN COMPLETE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ELECTION PROCESS, AND PROVIDE ALL

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FACILITIES FOR OBSERVERS, INCLUDING INTERPRETERS, CAR RENTALS, AND PLANE AND HELICOPTER SERVICE.

8. THIEU THEN COMMENTED THAT IF HE WERE RE-ELECTED HE FELT THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT HE PROCEED TO FORM A POLITICAL PARTY WHICH COULD BE A REAL FORCE IN THE COUNTRY. HE HAD NOT THOUGHT IT ADVISABLE TO DO THIS DURING HIS FIRST TERM SINCE HE WOULD BE ACCUSED OF CREATING A PARTY FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL USE SINCE HE WOULD BE INELIGIBLE FOR RE-ELECTION THIS COULD NOT BE A VALID CRITICISM DURING HIS SECOND TERM. HE CONTEMPLATED USING THE CAP TIEN PARTY OF BONG AND HUY AS A NUCLEUS, ASSERTING THAT OF ALL THE PARTIES THEY HAD DEVELOPED THE BEST ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK. AT THE SAME TIME, HE WOULD SUPPORT THE FORMATION OF AN OPPOSITION PARTY WHICH GENERAL MINH OR SOME OTHER MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION MIGHT HEAD.

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